

Message Text

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PAGE 01 THE HA 04712 251057Z
ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 MCE-00
HA-05 /068 W
-----106086 252228Z /14

R 250940Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3229
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USNATO
USNMR SHAPE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
CINC USAREUR HEIDELBERG

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 4712

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, NL
SUBJECT: US/GERMAN COMPETITION FOR TANK SALE TO THE NETHERLANDS

1. AD PLOEG, LIBERAL PARTY PARLIAMENTARIAN AND VICE
CHAIRMAN OF THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE, HAS EXPRESSED TO US
CONCERN THAT THE U.S. HAS NOT BEEN AGGRESSIVE ENOUGH IN
ITS EFFORTS TO SELL THE XM-1 TANK TO THE NETHERLANDS.
AS A RESULT, HE SAID, THE DUTCH ARE UNSURE WHETHER THE
U.S. IS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THIS SALE; HE URGED US TO
UNDERTAKE IMMEDIATELY THE NECESSARY STEPS TO MAKE ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO MOD AND PARLIAMENTARY OFFICIALS
TO ENABLE THEM TO MAKE A MEANINGFUL CHOICE BETWEEN
THE XM-1 AND THE GERMAN LEOPARD II.

2. PLOEG POINTED OUT THAT WIN VAN EEKELEN, STATE SECRETARY
OF DEFENSE FOR MATERIEL, HAS HELD A NUMBER OF DISCUSSIONS
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HERE AND IN GERMANY REGARDING COPRODUCTION AND FINANCIAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR A POSSIBLE LEOPARD II SALE. PLOEG AND
SEVERAL OTHER MEMBERS OF THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE ARE
SCHEDULED TO VISIT GERMANY IN SEPTEMBER FOR TANK DISCUSSIONS.
THE GERMANS HAVE MOUNTED A MAJOR CAMPAIGN AND ARE STRESSING
THE ADVANTAGES OF THEIR TANK AS REGARDS LOGISTICS, PARTS AND
MAINTENANCE.

3. PLOEG RECOMMENDED THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND CHRYSLER UNDERTAKE A MAJOR CAMPAIGN TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT THE XM-1, ARRANGE FOR VISITS OF COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES TO THE NETHERLANDS AND VISITS BY APPROPRIATE DUTCH OFFICIALS TO THE FACTORY AND PROVING GROUNDS IN THE U.S. FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID THAT HE AND KLAAS DE VRIES, CHAIRMAN OF THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE, WILL BE IN WASHINGTON AT THE END OF OCTOBER OR BEGINNING OF NOVEMBER FOR A MEETING OF THE NORTHERN FLANK SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE ATLANTIC ASSEMBLY; THEY WOULD BE PLEASED TO VISIT THE TANK FACTORY OR TESTING GROUND ON THAT OCCASION, BUT ANY SUCH VISITS SHOULD NOT BE ANY LATER THAN THAT DATE. (PLOEG'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE SITUATION IS NOT ENTIRELY CURRENT; A TEAM OF CHRYSLER REPRESENTATIVES HAS BEEN IN THE NETHERLANDS THIS WEEK AND HAS BEEN MEETING WITH DUTCH INDUSTRY AND MILITARY REPRESENTATIVES.)

4. PLOEG IS A PARTY COLLEAGUE AND TRUSTED FRIEND OF VAN EEKELLEN AND HE MAY BE EXPRESSING THE LATTER'S VIEWS, ALTHOUGH VAN EEKELLEN WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN MORE AWARE THAN PLOEG OF THE CURRENT CHRYSLER EFFORTS. WE KNOW FROM OTHER DISCUSSIONS THAT THE DUTCH ARE SOMEWHAT PUZZLED THAT WE HAVE NOT PUSHED THE TANK SALE MORE VIGOROUSLY. THEY TELL US THAT WHILE WE MAY LOSE A POSSIBLE P-3 SALE TO THE FRENCH ATLANTIQUE BECAUSE OF THE SUBSTANTIAL FRENCH OFFERS OF CO-PRODUCTION, AIRBUS SUBCONTRACTS FOR DUTCH

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FIRMS AND PROMISES OF FRENCH PURCHASES OF FOKKER AIRCRAFT, THEY CANNOT UNDERSTAND OUR PERMITTING THE XM-1 SALE TO GO THE GERMANS ALMOST BY DEFAULT. ADDITIONALLY, WE HEAR INFORMAL COMMENTS THAT THERE MAY BE AN UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE USG AND BONN THAT THE DUTCH SHOULD BUY THE LEOPARD II.

5. WE DO NOT ACCEPT THAT ALL IS LOST BECAUSE OF PLOEG'S REMARKS, BUT WE DO THINK THEY REQUIRE A CONVINCING REJOINDER FROM OUR SIDE. ANY GUIDANCE WASHINGTON CAN GIVE US REGARDING A RESPONSE TO MAKE TO PLOEG AND OTHERS WOULD BE VALUABLE. FURTHERMORE, CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO BRINGING DE VRIES AND PLOEG UP TO DATE ON THE XM-1 WHEN THEY ARE IN THE U.S. THIS FALL.

JOSEPH

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SALES, TANKS (COMBAT VEHICLES), MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978THEHA04712
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780349-0387
Format: TEL
From: THE HAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780821/aaaaario.tel
Line Count: 109
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3b3f755b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1614466
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US/GERMAN COMPETITION FOR TANK SALE TO THE NETHERLANDS
TAGS: MASS, NL
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3b3f755b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014